

Dutch is one of the closest relatives of both German and English^[n 5] and is colloquially said to be "roughly in between" them.^[n 6] Dutch, like English, has not undergone the High German consonant shift, does not use Germanic umlaut as a grammatical marker, has largely abandoned the use of the subjunctive, and has levelled much of its morphology, including most of its case system.^[n 7] Features shared with German include the survival of two to three grammatical genders—albeit with few grammatical consequences^[n 8]—as well as the use of modal particles,^[9] final-obstruent devoicing, and a similar word order.^[n 9] Dutch vocabulary is mostly Germanic and incorporates slightly more Romance loans than German but far fewer than English.^[n 10] As with German, the vocabulary of Dutch also has strong similarities with the continental Scandinavian languages, but is not mutually intelligible in text or speech with any of them.

| Dutch | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Nederlands | |
| Pronunciation | [ˈneːdərlɑnts] <div> (listen)</div> |
| Native to | Netherlands and Flanders |
| Region | Netherlands, <div></div> Belgium, <div></div> Suriname, and <div></div> Indonesia; also in Aruba, Curaçao, Sint Maarten, French Flanders |
| Ethnicity | Dutch <div></div> Flemings <div></div> Indo Surinamese |
| Native speakers | 24 million (2016) ^[1] <div>Total (L1 plus L2 speakers): 29 million (2018)^{[2][3]}</div> |
| Language family | <div>Indo-European</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Germanic <ul style="list-style-type: none">West Germanic <ul style="list-style-type: none">Low Franconian (Frankish) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Dutch |
| Early forms | <div>Old Dutch</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Middle Dutch |
| Writing system | Latin (Dutch alphabet) <div></div> Dutch Braille |
| Signed forms | Signed Dutch (<i>NmG</i>) |
| Official status | |
| Official language in | Belgium |

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Name

In both Belgium and the Netherlands, the native official name for Dutch is *Nederlands*.^{[10][11]} Sometimes *Vlaams* ("Flemish") is used as well to describe Standard Dutch in Flanders.^[12] Over time, the Dutch language has been known under a variety of names. In Middle Dutch *Dietsc*, *Duutsc*, or *Duitsc* was used.^[13] It derived from the Old Germanic word *theudisk*, which literally means "popular" or "belonging to the populace". In Western Europe this term was used for the language of the local Germanic

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| <div> <div></div> <div>Netherlands</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>Suriname</div> </div> <div> <div>Dependent entities</div> <div> <div></div> <div>Aruba</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>Curaçao</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>Sint Maarten</div> </div> </div> <div> <div>Organisations</div> <div> <div></div> <div>Benelux</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>European Union</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>South American Union</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>Caribbean Community</div> </div> </div> | |
| Regulated by | Nederlandse Taalunie (Dutch Language Union) |
| Language codes | |
| ISO 639-1 | n l (https://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/php/langcodes_name.php?iso_639_1=nl) |
| ISO 639-2 | dut (https://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/php/langcodes_name.php?code_ID=123) (B) nld (https://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/php/langcodes_name.php?code_ID=123) (T) |
| ISO 639-3 | nld Dutch/Flemish |
| Glottolog | mode1257 (http://glottolog.org/resource/lan |

populace as opposed to Latin, the non-native language of writing and the Catholic Church.^[14] In the first text in which it is found, dating from 784, *theodisce* refers to Anglo-Saxon, the West Germanic dialects of Britain.^{[15][16]} Although in Britain the name *Englisc* replaced *theodisce* early on, speakers of West Germanic in other parts of Europe continued to use *theodisce* to refer to their local speech. With the rise of local powers in the Low Countries during the Middle Ages, language names derived from these local polities came in use as well i.e. *Vlaemsch*, *Hollandsch*, and *Brabantsch*. The more powerful the local polity, the wider the use of its name for the language became.^[17] These names still survive in the corresponding dialect groups spoken today.^{[10][11]}

Owing to commercial and colonial rivalry in the 16th and 17th centuries between England and the Low Countries, a cognate of *theodisk* (most likely Middle Dutch *Duutsc*) was borrowed into English and developed into the exonym *Dutch*, which came to refer exclusively to the people of the Netherlands. (A usage of the English term *Dutch* that includes German survives in the United States in the name Pennsylvania Dutch for a local German dialect and its speakers, commonly believed to be a corruption of their endonym *Deutsch*.) In the Low Countries on the contrary, *Dietsch* or *Duytsch* as endonym for Dutch went out of common use and was gradually replaced by the Dutch endonym *Nederlands*. This designation started at the Burgundian court in the 15th century, although the use of *neder*, *laag*, *bas*, and *inferior* ("nether" or "low") to refer to the area known as the Low Counties goes back further in time. The Romans referred to the region as *Germania Inferior* ("Lower" Germania).^{[18][19][20]} It is a reference to the Low Countries' downriver location at the Rhine–Meuse–Scheldt delta near the North Sea.

From 1551, the designation *Nederlands* received strong competition from the name *Nederduits* ("Low Dutch;" *Dutch* is used here in its archaic sense that covers all continental West Germanic languages). It is a calque of the aforementioned Roman province *Germania Inferior* and an attempt by early Dutch grammarians to give their language more prestige by linking it to Roman times. Likewise, *Hoogduits* ("High German") came into use as a Dutch exonym for the German language, spoken in neighboring German states.^[17] However, 19th century Germany saw the rise of the categorisation of dialects, and German dialectologists termed the German dialects spoken in the mountainous south of Germany as *Hochdeutsch* ("High German"). Subsequently, German dialects spoken in the north were designated as *Niederdeutsch* ("Low German"). The names for these dialects were calqued in the Dutch language area as the exonyms *Nederduits* and *Hoogduits*. As a result, *Nederduits* no longer served as a synonym for the Dutch language, and *Nederlands* prevailed as sole Dutch endonym. It also meant that *Hoog* ("High") had to be dropped in one of the two meanings of *Hoogduits*, leading to the narrowing down of *Duits* as Dutch exonym for the German language, and *Hoogduits* as reference for southern German dialects.

History

Old Dutch branched off more or less around the same time as Old English (Anglo-Saxon), Old High German, Old Frisian and Old Saxon did. The early form of Dutch was a set of Franconian dialects spoken by the Salian Franks in the fifth century, and thus, it has developed through Middle Dutch to Modern Dutch over the course of 15 centuries.^[21] During that period, it forced Old Frisian back from the western coast to the north of the Low Countries, and influenced or even replaced Old Saxon spoken in the east (contiguous with the Low German area). On the other hand, Dutch has been replaced in adjacent lands in present-day

| | |
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| | guoid/id/mode1257) ^[4] |
| Linguasphere | 52-ACB-a |
|  | |
| Dutch-speaking world (included are areas of daughter-language Afrikaans) | |
|  | |
| Distribution of the Dutch language and its dialects in Western Europe | |

France and Germany. The division into Old, Middle and Modern Dutch is mostly conventional, since the transition between them was very gradual. One of the few moments when linguists can detect something of a revolution is when the Dutch standard language emerged and quickly established itself. The development of the Dutch language is illustrated by the following sentence in Old, Middle and Modern Dutch:

- *Irlôsin sol an frithe sêla mîna fan thên thia ginâcont mi, wanda under managon he was mit mi* (Old Dutch)
- *Erlossen sal [hi] in vrede siele mine van dien die genaken mi, want onder menegen hi was met mi* (Middle Dutch)
- *Verlossen zal hij in vrede ziel mijn van degenen die genaken mij, want onder menigen hij was met mij* (Modern Dutch, same word order)
- *Hij zal mijn ziel in vrede verlossen van degenen die mij genaken, want onder menigen was hij met mij* (Modern Dutch, default word order)^[22]
- *He will deliver my soul in peace from those who approach me, because, amongst many, he was with me* (English)^[23]

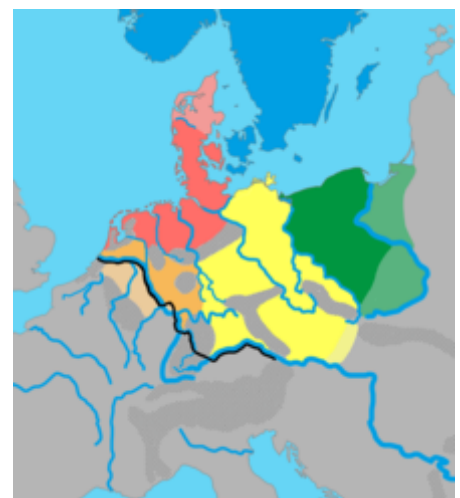


Map of the pre-Roman Iron Age in Northern Europe culture(s) associated with the Proto-Germanic language, ca 500–50 BCE. The area south of Scandinavia is the Jastorf culture.

Origins

Among the Indo-European languages, Dutch is grouped within the Germanic languages, meaning it shares a common ancestor with languages such as English, German, and the Scandinavian languages. All Germanic languages are subject to the Grimm's law and Verner's law sound shifts, which originated in the Proto-Germanic language and define the basic features differentiating them from other Indo-European languages. This is assumed to have taken place in approximately the mid-first millennium BCE in the pre-Roman Northern European Iron Age.^[24]

The Germanic languages are traditionally divided into three groups: East (now extinct), West, and North Germanic.^[25] They remained mutually intelligible throughout the Migration Period. Dutch is part of the West Germanic group, which also includes English, Scots, Frisian, Low German (Old Saxon) and High German. It is characterized by a number of phonological and morphological innovations not found in North or East Germanic.^[26] The West Germanic varieties of the time are generally split into three dialect groups: Ingvaemonic (North Sea Germanic), Istvaeonic (Weser-Rhine Germanic) and Irminonic (Elbe Germanic). It appears that the Frankish tribes fit primarily into the Istvaeonic dialect group with certain Ingvaemonic influences towards the northwest, which are still seen in modern Dutch.



The distribution of the primary Germanic languages in Europe in around AD 1:

- ☐ North Germanic
- ☐ North Sea Germanic, or Ingvaemonic
- ☐ Weser-Rhine Germanic, or Istvaeonic
- ☐ Elbe Germanic, or Irminonic
- ☐ East Germanic

Frankish (3rd–5th century)

The Frankish language itself is poorly attested. A notable exception is the Bergakker inscription, found near the Dutch city of Tiel, which may represent a primary record of 5th-century Frankish. Although some place names recorded in Roman texts such as *vadam* (modern Dutch: *wad*, English: "mudflat"), could arguably be considered as the oldest single "Dutch" words, the Bergakker inscription yields the oldest evidence of Dutch morphology. However, there is no consensus on the interpretation of the rest of the text.^[27]

The Franks emerged in the southern Netherlands (Salian Franks) and central Germany (Riparian Franks), and later descended into Gaul. The name of their kingdom survives in that of France. Although they ruled the Gallo-Romans for nearly 300 years, their language, Frankish, became extinct in most of France and was replaced by later forms of the language throughout Luxembourg and Germany in around the 7th century. It was replaced in France by Old French (a Romance language with a considerable Old Frankish influence).

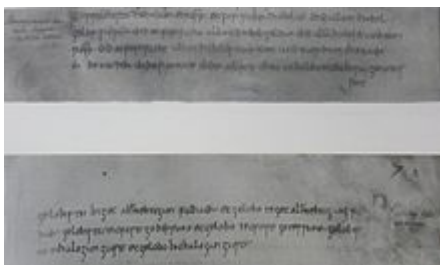
However, the Old Franconian language did not die out at large, as it continued to be spoken in the Low Countries, and subsequently evolved into what is now called Old Low Franconian or Old Dutch in the Low Countries. In fact, Old Frankish could be reconstructed from Old Dutch and Frankish loanwords in Old French.^[28]

Old Dutch (5th–12th century)

Old Low Franconian or Old Dutch is regarded as the prime ancestor of a separate Dutch language. The "Low" in Old Low Franconian refers to the Low Countries, where Frankish was only minimally influenced by the High German consonant shift and the Ingvaenic nasal spirant law. The High German consonant shift, moving over Western Europe from south to west, caused a differentiation with the Central and High Franconian in Germany. The latter would as a consequence evolve (along with Alemannic, Bavarian and Lombardic) into Old High German. At more or less the same time the Ingvaenic nasal spirant law, moving over Western Europe from west to east, led to the development of Old English (or Anglo-Saxon), Old Frisian and Old Saxon. Hardly influenced by either development, Old Dutch remained close to the original language of the Franks, the people that would rule Europe for centuries. The language did however experience developments of its own, such as very early final-obstruent devoicing. In fact, the find at Bergakker indicates that the language may already have experienced this shift during the Old Frankish period.



Area in which Old Dutch was spoken



The Utrecht baptismal vow

Attestations of Old Dutch sentences are extremely rare. The language is mostly recorded on fragmentary relics, and words have been reconstructed from Middle Dutch and loan words from Old Dutch in other languages.^[29] The oldest recorded is found in the Salic law. In this Frankish document written around 510 the oldest Dutch sentence has been identified: *Maltho thi afrio lito* ("I say to you, I free you, serf") used to free a serf. Another old fragment of Dutch is *Visc flot aftar themo uuatere* ("A fish was swimming in the water"). The oldest conserved larger Dutch text is the Utrecht baptismal vow (776–800) starting with *Forsachistu diabolae ... ec forsacho diabolae* (litt.: "Forsake you the devil? ... I forsake the

devil"). If only for its poetic content, the most famous Old Dutch sentence is probably *Hebban olla vogala nestas hagunnan, hinase hic enda tu, wat unbidan we nu* ("All birds have started making nests, except me and you, what are we waiting for"), is dated to around the year 1100, written by a Flemish monk in a convent in Rochester, England. Since the sentence speaks to the imagination, it is often erroneously stated as the oldest Dutch sentence.

Middle Dutch (12th–15th century)

Old Dutch naturally evolved into Middle Dutch. The year 1150 is often cited as the time of the discontinuity, but it actually marks a time of profuse Dutch writing and during this period a rich Medieval Dutch literature developed. There was at that time no overarching standard language; Middle Dutch is rather a collective name for a number of closely related mutually intelligible dialects whose ancestor was Old Dutch. Where Old Dutch fragments are very hard to read for untrained Modern Dutch speakers, the various literary works of Middle Dutch are somewhat more accessible.^[30] The most notable difference between Old and Middle Dutch is in a feature of speech known as vowel reduction. Round vowels in word-final syllables are rather frequent in Old Dutch; in Middle Dutch, such vowels are leveled to a schwa.

The Middle Dutch dialect areas were affected by political boundaries. The sphere of political influence of a certain ruler often also created a sphere of linguistic influence, with the language within the area becoming more homogenous. Following the contemporary political divisions they are in order of importance:

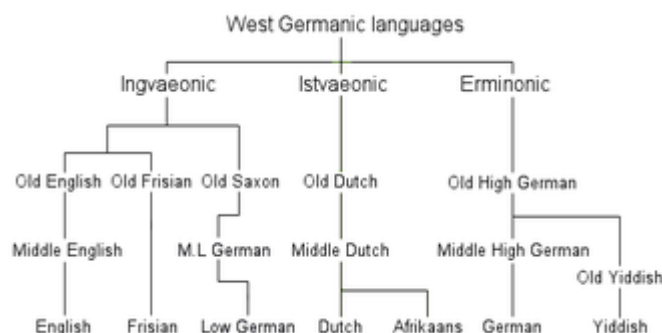
- West Flemish with the County of Flanders at its centre. It had been influential during the earlier Middle Ages (the "Flemish expansion") but lost prestige to the neighbouring Brabantian in the 13th century.
- Brabantian (and related East Flemish), spoken primarily in the Duchy of Brabant and adjacent parts. It was an influential dialect during most of the Middle Ages, during the so-called "Brabantian expansion" in which the influence of Brabant was extended outwards into other areas.
- Hollandic, which had the County of Holland as its heartland, where originally Old Frisian was spoken. The people mixed with Frankish settlers from Flanders and Brabant and a new Frankish dialect with a Frisian substrate developed. It was less influential during most of the Middle Ages but became more so in the 16th century during the "Hollandic expansion"; the Eighty Years' War took place in the Southern Netherlands during this period.
- Limburgish, spoken by the people in the modern-day provinces of Dutch and Belgian Limburg, and adjacent lands in Germany. It was over time tied to different political areas and is therefore the most divergent of the dialects. It was even partly influenced by the High German consonant shift and is the most distant to the later developed standard language to which it contributed little. It was however the earliest Middle Dutch dialect that developed a literary tradition.
- Since it has Old Saxon and not Low Franconian (Old Dutch) as its ancestor, Dutch Low Saxon is not strictly a Dutch dialect. However, it was influenced by Middle Dutch since the 14th century and it did play a part in the formation of the standard Dutch language in later periods. It was spoken in the Oversticht territories of the episcopal principality of Utrecht and adjacent parts of Guelders.

Modern Dutch (15th century–present)

A process of standardisation started in the Middle Ages, especially under the influence of the Burgundian Ducal Court in Dijon (Brussels after 1477). The dialects of Flanders and Brabant were the most influential around this time. The process of standardisation became much stronger at the start of the 16th century, mainly based on the urban dialect of Antwerp. The 1585 fall of Antwerp to the Spanish army led to a flight to the northern Netherlands, where the Dutch Republic declared its independence from Spain. This influenced the urban dialects of the province of County of Holland. In 1637, a further important step was made towards a unified language,^[32] when the Statenvertaling, the first major Bible translation into Dutch, was created that people from all over the new republic could understand. It used elements from various, even Dutch Low Saxon, dialects but was predominantly based on the urban dialects of Holland of post 16th century.^[33]

In the Southern Netherlands (now Belgium and Luxembourg), developments were different. Under subsequent Spanish, Austrian and French rule, the standardisation of Dutch language came to a standstill. The state, law, and increasingly education used French, yet more than half the Belgian population were speaking a variety of Dutch. In the course of the nineteenth century the Flemish Movement stood up for the rights of Dutch speakers, mostly referred to as "Flemish". However, the dialect variation was a serious disadvantage in the face of the standardised francophony.^[34] Since standardisation is a lengthy process, Dutch-speaking Belgium associated itself with the standard language that had already developed in the Netherlands over the centuries. Therefore, the situation in Belgium is essentially no different from that in the Netherlands, although there are recognisable differences in pronunciation, comparable to the pronunciation differences between standard British and standard American English.^[35] In 1980 the Netherlands and Belgium concluded the Language Union Treaty. This treaty lays down the principle that the two countries must gear their language policy to each other, among other things, for a common system of spelling.

Classification



The simplified relation between the West Germanic languages



Title page of the Statenvertaling (1637) reads: *Biblia [...] Uyt de Oorspronckelijcke talen in onse Neder-landsche tale getrouwelijck over-geset*. (English: From the Original languages into our Dutch language faithfully translated).^[31]

- Indo-European languages
 - Germanic
 - West Germanic
 - Low Franconian
 - Dutch
 - Afrikaans, Dutch-based creoles

Dutch belongs to its own West Germanic sub-group, the Low Franconian languages, paired with its sister language Limburgish or East Low Franconian. Its closest relative is the mutually intelligible daughter language, Afrikaans. Other West Germanic languages related to Dutch are German, English and the Frisian languages and the un-standardised languages Low German and Yiddish.

Dutch stands out in combining some Ingvaemonic characteristics (occurring consistently in English and Frisian and reduced in intensity from west to east over the continental West Germanic plane) with dominant Istvaeonic characteristics, some of which are also incorporated in German. Unlike German, Dutch (apart from Limburgish) has not been influenced at all by the south to north movement of the High German consonant shift and had some changes of its own.^[n 11] The cumulation of these changes resulted over time in separate, but related standard languages with various degrees of similarities and differences between them. For a comparison between the West Germanic languages, see the sections Morphology, Grammar and Vocabulary.

Dialects

Dutch dialects are primarily the dialects that are both related with the Dutch language and are spoken in the same language area as the Dutch standard language. Although heavily under the influence of the standard language, some of them remain remarkably diverse and are found in the Netherlands and northern Belgium. The areas in which they are spoken often correspond with former mediaeval counties and duchies. The Netherlands (but not Belgium) distinguishes between a dialect and a *streektaal* ("regional language"). Those words are actually more political than linguistic because a regional language unites a large group of very different varieties. Such is the case with the Gronings dialect, which is considered a variety of the Dutch Low Saxon regional language, but it is relatively distinct from other Dutch Low Saxon varieties. Also, some Dutch dialects are more remote from the Dutch standard language than some varieties of a regional language are. Within the Netherlands, a further distinction is made between a regional language and a separate language, which is the case with the (standardised) West Frisian language. It is spoken alongside Dutch in the province of Friesland.

Dutch dialects and regional languages are not spoken as often as they used to be, especially in the Netherlands. Recent research by Geert Driessen shows that the use of dialects and regional languages among both Dutch adults and youth is in heavy decline. In 1995, 27 percent of the Dutch adult population spoke a dialect or regional language on a regular basis, but in 2011, that was no more than 11 percent. In 1995, 12 percent of children of primary school age spoke a dialect or regional language, but in 2011, that had declined to 4 percent. Of the officially recognized regional languages Limburgish is spoken the most (in 2011 among adults 54%, among children 31%) and Dutch Low Saxon the least (adults 15%, children 1%). The decline of the West Frisian language in Friesland occupies a middle position (adults 44%, children 22%). Dialects are most often spoken in rural areas, but many cities have a distinct city dialect. For example, the city of Ghent has very distinct "g", "e" and "r" sounds that greatly differ from its surrounding villages. The Brussels dialect combines Brabantian with words adopted from Walloon and French.

Some dialects had, until recently, extensions across the borders of other standard language areas. In most cases, the heavy influence of the standard language has broken the dialect continuum. Examples are the Gronings dialect spoken in Groningen as well as the closely related varieties in adjacent East Frisia (Germany). South Guelderish (*Zuid-Gelders*) is a dialect spoken in southern Gelderland, the northern tip of Limburg, and northeast of North Brabant (Netherlands), but also in adjacent parts of North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany). Limburgish (*Limburgs*) is spoken in Limburg (Belgium) as well as in the remaining part of Limburg (Netherlands) and extends across the German border. West Flemish (*Westvlaams*) is spoken in West Flanders, the western part of Zeelandic Flanders and also in French Flanders, where it virtually became extinct to make way for French.

Dialect groups

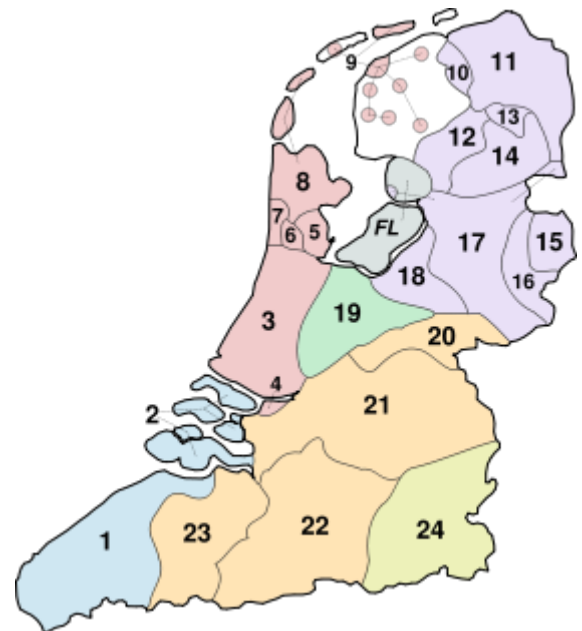
The **West Flemish** group of dialects, spoken in West Flanders and Zeeland, is so distinct that it might be considered as a separate language variant, although the strong significance of language in Belgian politics would prevent the government from classifying them as such. An oddity of the dialect is that, the voiced

velar fricative (written as "g" in Dutch) shifts to a voiced glottal fricative (written as "h" in Dutch), while the letter "h" becomes mute (just like in French). As a result, when West Flemings try to talk Standard Dutch, they're often unable to pronounce the g-sound, and pronounce it similar to the h-sound. This leaves, for example, no difference between "held" (hero) and "geld" (money). Or in some cases, they are aware of the problem, and hyper-correct the "h" into a voiced velar fricative or g-sound, again leaving no difference. The West Flemish variety historically spoken in adjacent parts in France is sometimes called French Flemish and is listed as a French minority language, however only a very small and aging minority of the French-Flemish population still speaks and understands West Flemish.

Hollandic is spoken in Holland and Utrecht, though the original forms of this dialect (which were heavily influenced by a West Frisian substratum and, from the 16th century on, by Brabantian dialects) are now relatively rare. The urban dialects of the Randstad, which are Hollandic dialects, do not diverge from standard Dutch very much, but there is a clear difference between the city dialects of Rotterdam, The Hague, Amsterdam and Utrecht. In some rural Hollandic areas more authentic Hollandic dialects are still being used, especially north of Amsterdam. Another group of dialects based on Hollandic is that spoken in the cities and larger towns of Friesland, where it partially displaced West Frisian in the 16th century and is known as Stadsfries ("Urban Frisian").

Brabantian is named after the historical Duchy of Brabant, which corresponded mainly to the provinces of North Brabant and southern Gelderland, the Belgian provinces of Antwerp and Flemish Brabant, as well as Brussels (where its native speakers have become a minority) and the province of Walloon Brabant. Brabantian expands into small parts in the west of Limburg while its strong influence on the East Flemish of East Flanders and eastern Zeelandic Flanders^[36] weakens towards the west. In a small area in the northwest of North Brabant (Willemstad), Hollandic is spoken. Conventionally, the South Guelderish dialects are distinguished from Brabantian, but there are no objective criteria apart from geography to do so. Over 5 million people live in an area with some form of Brabantian being the predominant colloquial language out of the area's 22 million Dutch-speakers.^{[37][38]}

Limburgish, spoken in both Belgian Limburg and Netherlands Limburg and in adjacent parts in Germany, is considered a dialect in Belgium, while having obtained the official status of regional language in the Netherlands.



Dutch dialects

☐ West Flemish

1. West Flemish and Zeeuws Flemish

2. Zeelandic

☐ Hollandic

3. South Hollandic

4. Westthoeks

5. Waterlands and Volendams

6. Zaans

7. Kennemerlands

8. West Frisian

9. Bildts, Midlands, Stadsfries and Amelands

☐ Dutch Low Saxon

10. Kollumerlands

11. Gronings and North Drents

12. Stellingwerfs

13. Middle Drents

14. South Drents

15. Twents

16. Twents-Graafschaps

17. Sallands, Achterhooks and Urks

18. Veluws

☐ Eastern Hollandic

19. Utrechts-Alblasserwaards

☐ Brabantian

Limburgish has been influenced by the Riparian varieties like the Colognian dialect, and has had a somewhat different development since the late Middle Ages.

Regional languages

Two dialect groups have been given the official status of regional language (or *streektaal*) in the Netherlands. Like several other dialect groups, both are part of a dialect continuum that continues across the national border.

Dutch Low Saxon

The Dutch Low Saxon dialect area comprises the provinces of Groningen, Drenthe and Overijssel, as well as parts of the provinces of Gelderland, Flevoland, Friesland and Utrecht. This group, which is not Low Franconian but instead Low Saxon and close to neighbouring Low German, has been elevated by the Netherlands (and by Germany) to the legal status of *streektaal* (regional language) according to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. It is regarded as Dutch for a number of reasons. From the 14th to 15th century onward, its urban centers (Deventer, Zwolle, Kampen, Zutphen and Doesburg) have been increasingly influenced by the western written Dutch and became a linguistically mixed area. From the 17th century onward, it was gradually integrated into the Dutch language area.^[39] Dutch Low Saxon used to be at one end of the Low German dialect continuum. However, the national border has given way to dialect boundaries coinciding with a political border, because the traditional dialects are strongly influenced by the national standard varieties.^[40] Cross-the-border dialects now separated by a plain gap also include South Guelderish and Limburgish on the Dutch side of the border and Meuse-Rhenish on the German side of the border.^[41]

Limburgish

While a somewhat heterogeneous group of Low Franconian dialects, Limburgish has received official status as a regional language in the Netherlands and Germany, but not in Belgium. Due to this official recognition, it receives protection by chapter 2 of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

Daughter and sister languages

Afrikaans, although to a significant degree mutually intelligible with Dutch, is not a dialect but a separate standardised language. It is spoken in South Africa and Namibia. As a daughter language of Dutch, Afrikaans evolved mainly from 17th century Dutch dialects, but was influenced by various other languages in South Africa.

West Frisian (*Westerlauwers Fries*), along with Saterland Frisian and North Frisian, evolved from the same branch of the West Germanic languages as Old English (i.e. Anglo-Frisian) and are therefore genetically more closely related to English and Scots than to Dutch. The different influences on the respective languages, however, particularly that of Norman French on English and Dutch on West Frisian, have rendered English quite distinct from West Frisian, and West Frisian less distinct from Dutch than from English. Although under heavy influence of the Dutch standard language, it is not mutually intelligible with Dutch and considered a sister language of Dutch, like English and German.^[42]

20. South Guelderish

21. North Brabantian and North Limburgs

22. Brabantian

23. East Flemish

☐ Limburgish

24. Limburgish

☐ Miscellaneous

FL. Province Flevoland. No dialect a majority, because of its short existence. (Post World War II)

The blank area (near zone 9) speaks West Frisian, a separate language.

Geographic distribution

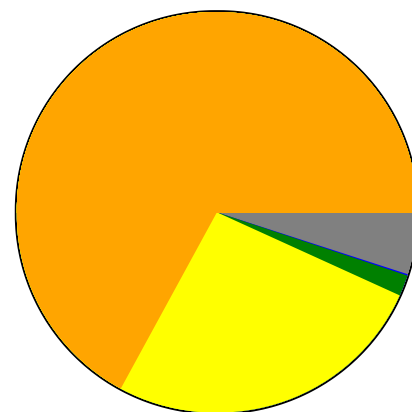
Dutch is an official language of the Netherlands proper, Belgium, Suriname, the Dutch Caribbean municipal (St. Eustatius Saba & Bonaire), Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten. Dutch is also an official language of several international organisations, such as the European Union,^[51] Union of South American Nations^[52] and the Caribbean Community. At an academic level, Dutch is taught in about 175 universities in 40 countries. About 15,000 students worldwide study Dutch at university.^[53]

Europe

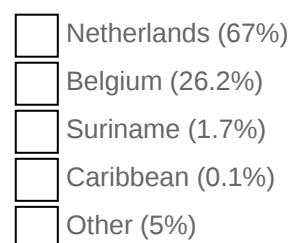
In Europe, Dutch is the majority language in the Netherlands (96%) and Belgium (59%) as well as a minority language in Germany and northern France's French Flanders. Though Belgium as a whole is multilingual, the four language areas into which the country is divided (Flanders, francophone Wallonia, bilingual Brussels and the German-speaking Community) are largely monolingual. The Netherlands and Belgium produce the vast majority of music, films, books and other media written or spoken in Dutch.^[54] Dutch is a monocentric language, at least what concerns its written form, with all speakers using the same standard form (authorized by the Dutch Language Union) based on a Dutch orthography defined in the so-called "Green Booklet" authoritative dictionary and employing the Latin alphabet when writing; however pronunciation varies between dialects. Indeed, in stark contrast to its written uniformity, Dutch lacks a unique prestige dialect and has a large dialectal continuum consisting of 28 main dialects, which can themselves be further divided into at least 600 distinguishable varieties.^{[55][56]} In the Netherlands, the Hollandic dialect dominates in national broadcast media while in Flanders Brabantian dialect dominates in that capacity, making them in turn unofficial prestige dialects in their respective countries.

Outside the Netherlands and Belgium, the dialect around the German town of Kleve (South Guelderish) is historically and genetically a Low Franconian variety. In North-Western France, the area around Calais was historically Dutch-speaking (West Flemish), of which an estimated 20,000 are daily speakers. The cities of Dunkirk, Gravelines and Bourbourg only became predominantly French-speaking by the end of the 19th century. In the countryside, until World War I, many elementary schools continued to teach in Dutch, and the Catholic Church continued to preach and teach the catechism in Dutch in many parishes.^[57]

During the second half of the 19th century, Dutch was banned from all levels of education by both Prussia and France and lost most of its functions as a cultural language. In both Germany and France, the Dutch standard language is largely absent, and speakers of these Dutch dialects will use German or French in everyday speech. Dutch is not afforded legal status in France or Germany, either by the central or regional public authorities, and knowledge of the language is declining among younger generations.^[58]



Approximate distribution of native Dutch speakers (assuming a rounded total of 24 million) worldwide.



Dutch First Language Speakers

| Country | Speakers | Year |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------|
| Netherlands | 16,074,000 ^{[43][44]} | 2017 |
| Belgium | 6,291,500 ^{[45][44]} | 2017 |
| Suriname | 400,000 ^[46] | 2017 |
| Curaçao | 12,000 ^[47] | 2011 |
| Aruba | 6,000 ^[48] | 2010 |
| Caribbean Netherlands | 3,000 ^[49] | 2018 |
| Sint Maarten | 1,500 ^[50] | 2011 |
| Total worldwide | 22,788,000 | N/A |

As a foreign language, Dutch is mainly taught in primary and secondary schools in areas adjacent to the Netherlands and Flanders. In French-speaking Belgium, over 300,000 pupils are enrolled in Dutch courses, followed by over 23,000 in the German states of Lower Saxony and North Rhine-Westphalia, and about 7,000 in the French region of Nord-Pas-de-Calais (of which 4,550 are in primary school).^[59] At an academic level, the largest number of faculties of *neerlandistiek* can be found in Germany (30 universities), followed by France (20 universities) and the United Kingdom (5 universities).^{[59][60]}

Asia and Australasia

Asia

Despite the Dutch presence in Indonesia for almost 350 years, as the Asian bulk of the Dutch East Indies, the Dutch language has no official status there^[61] and the small minority that can speak the language fluently are either educated members of the oldest generation, or employed in the legal profession,^[62] as certain law codes are still only available in Dutch.^[63] Dutch is taught in various educational centres in Indonesia, the most important of which is the Erasmus Language Centre (ETC) in Jakarta. Each year, some 1,500 to 2,000 students take Dutch courses there.^[64] In total, several thousand Indonesians study Dutch as a foreign language.^[65] Owing to centuries of Dutch rule in Indonesia, many old documents are written in Dutch. Many universities therefore include Dutch as a source language, mainly for law and history students.^[66] In Indonesia this involves about 35,000 students.^[53]

Unlike other European nations, the Dutch chose not to follow a policy of language expansion amongst the indigenous peoples of their colonies.^[67] In the last quarter of the 19th century, however, a local elite gained proficiency in Dutch so as to meet the needs of expanding bureaucracy and business.^[68] Nevertheless, the Dutch government remained reluctant to teach Dutch on a large scale for fear of destabilising the colony. Dutch, the language of power, was supposed to remain in the hands of the leading elite.^[68]

After independence, Dutch was dropped as an official language and replaced by Malay. Yet the Indonesian language inherited many words from Dutch: words for everyday life as well as scientific and technological terms.^[69] One scholar argues that 20% of Indonesian words can be traced back to Dutch words,^[70] many of which are transliterated to reflect phonetic pronunciation e.g. *kantoor* "office" in Indonesian is *kantor*, while *bus* "bus" becomes *bis*. In addition, many Indonesian words are calques of Dutch; for example, *rumah sakit* "hospital" is calqued on the Dutch *ziekenhuis* (literally "sickhouse"), *kebun binatang* "zoo" on *dierentuin* (literally "animal garden"), *undang-undang dasar* "constitution" from *grondwet* (literally "ground law"). These account for some of the differences in vocabulary between Indonesian and Malay.

Australasia

After the declaration of independence of Indonesia, Western New Guinea, the "wild east" of the Dutch East Indies, remained a Dutch colony until 1962, known as Netherlands New Guinea.^[71] Despite prolonged Dutch presence, the Dutch language is not spoken by many Papuans, the colony having been ceded to Indonesia in 1963.

Dutch-speaking immigrant communities can also be found in Australia and New Zealand. The 2011 Australian census showed 37,248 people speaking Dutch at home.^[72] At the 2006 New Zealand census, 26,982 people, or 0.70 percent of the total population, reported to speak Dutch to sufficient fluency that they could hold an everyday conversation.^[73]

Americas

In contrast to the colonies in the East Indies, from the second half of the 19th century onwards, the Netherlands envisaged the expansion of Dutch in its colonies in the West Indies. Until 1863, when slavery was abolished in the West Indies, slaves were forbidden to speak Dutch, with the effect that local creoles such as Papiamentu and Sranan Tongo which were based not on Dutch but rather other European languages, became common in the Dutch West Indies. However, as most of the people in the Colony of Surinam (now Suriname) worked on Dutch plantations, this reinforced the use of Dutch as a means for direct communication.^{[68][74]}



The location of Suriname in South America

In Suriname today, Dutch is the sole official language,^[75] and over 60 percent of the population speaks it as a mother tongue.^[6] Dutch is the obligatory medium of instruction in schools in Suriname, even for non-native speakers.^[76] A further twenty-four percent of the population speaks Dutch as a second language.^[77] Suriname gained its independence from the Netherlands in 1975 and has been an associate member of the Dutch Language Union since 2004.^[78] The lingua franca of Suriname, however, is Sranan Tongo,^[79] spoken natively by about a fifth of the population.^{[54][n 12]}



The location of the Dutch Caribbean in the southern Caribbean

In Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao and Sint Maarten, all parts of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Dutch is the official language but spoken as a first language by only 7% to 8% of the population,^[80] although most native-born people on the islands can speak the language since the education system is in Dutch at some or all levels.

In the United States, a now extinct dialect of Dutch, Jersey Dutch, spoken by descendants of 17th-century Dutch settlers in Bergen and Passaic counties, was still spoken as late as 1921.^[81] Other Dutch-based creole languages once spoken in the Americas include Mohawk Dutch (in Albany, New York), Berbice (in Guyana), Skepi (in Essequibo, Guyana) and Negerhollands (in the United States Virgin Islands). Pennsylvania Dutch is not a member of the set of Dutch dialects and is less misleadingly called Pennsylvania German.^[82]

Martin Van Buren, the eighth President of the United States, spoke Dutch natively and is the only U.S. President whose first language was not English. Dutch prevailed for many generations as the dominant language in parts of New York along the Hudson River. Another famous American born in this region who spoke Dutch as a first language was Sojourner Truth.

According to the 2000 United States census, 150,396 people spoke Dutch at home,^[83] while according to the 2006 Canadian census, this number reaches 160,000 Dutch speakers.^[84] At an academic level, 20 universities offer Dutch studies in the United States.^{[59][60]} In Canada, Dutch is the fourth most spoken language by farmers, after English, French and German,^[85] and the fifth most spoken non-official language overall (by 0.6% of Canadians).^[86]

Africa

The largest legacy of the Dutch language lies in South Africa, which attracted large numbers of Dutch, Flemish and other northwest European farmer (in Dutch, boer) settlers, all of whom were quickly assimilated.^[87] The long isolation from the rest of the Dutch-speaking world made the Dutch as spoken in Southern Africa evolve into what is now Afrikaans.^[88] In 1876, the first Afrikaans newspaper called Die Afrikaanse Patriot was published in the Cape Colony.^[89]

European Dutch remained the literary language^[88] until the start of the 1920s, when under pressure of Afrikaner nationalism the local "African" Dutch was preferred over the written, European-based standard.^[87] In 1925, section 137 of the 1909 constitution of the Union of South Africa was amended by Act 8 of 1925, stating "the word *Dutch* in article 137 ... is hereby declared to include Afrikaans".^{[90][91]} The constitution of 1983 only listed English and Afrikaans as official languages. It is estimated that between 90% to 95% of Afrikaans vocabulary is ultimately of Dutch origin.^{[92][93]}

Both languages are still largely mutually intelligible, although this relation can in some fields (such as lexicon, spelling and grammar) be asymmetric, as it is easier for Dutch speakers to understand written Afrikaans than it is for Afrikaans speakers to understand written Dutch.^[94] Afrikaans is grammatically far less complex than Dutch, and vocabulary items are generally altered in a clearly patterned manner, e.g. *vogel* becomes *voël* ("bird") and *regen* becomes *reën* ("rain").^[95] In South Africa, the number of students following Dutch at university is difficult to estimate, since the academic study of Afrikaans inevitably includes the study of Dutch.^[53] Elsewhere in the world, the number of people learning Dutch is relatively small.

It is the third language of South Africa in terms of native speakers (~13.5%),^[96] of whom 53% are Coloureds and 42.4% Whites.^[97] In 1996, 40 percent of South Africans reported to know Afrikaans at least at a very basic level of communication.^[98] It is the lingua franca in Namibia,^{[87][99][100]} where it is spoken natively in 11 percent of households.^[101] In total, Afrikaans is the first language in South Africa alone of about 7.1 million people^[96] and is estimated to be a second language for at least 10 million people worldwide,^[102] compared to over 23 million^[6] and 5 million respectively, for Dutch.^[2]

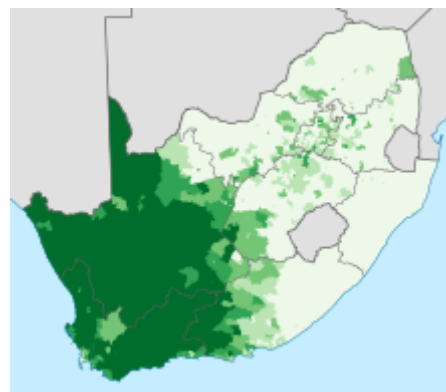
The Dutch colonial presence elsewhere in Africa, notably Dutch Gold Coast, was too ephemeral not to be wiped out by prevailing colonizing European successors. Belgian colonial presence in Congo and Rwanda-Urundi (Burundi and Rwanda, held under League of Nations mandate and later UN trust) left little (Flemish) Dutch legacy, as French was the main colonial language.^[103]

Phonology

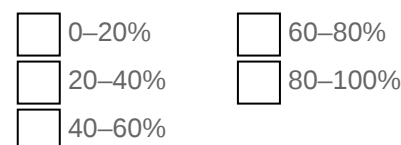
For further details on different realisations of phonemes, dialectal differences and example words, see the full article at Dutch phonology.

Consonants

Unlike other Germanic languages, Dutch has no phonological aspiration of consonants.^[104] Like most other Germanic languages, the Dutch consonant system did not undergo the High German consonant shift and has a syllable structure that allows fairly-complex consonant clusters. Dutch also retains full use of the velar fricatives of Proto-Germanic that were lost or modified in many other Germanic languages. Dutch has final-obstruent devoicing. At the end of a word, voicing distinction is neutralised and all obstruents are pronounced voiceless. For example, Dutch *goede* ("good") is /'ɣudə/ but the related form *goed* is /ɣut/.



The distribution of Afrikaans across South Africa: proportion of the population speaking Afrikaans at home



0:00 / 0:00

Spoken Dutch

Dutch shares this final-obstruent devoicing with German (the Dutch noun *goud* is pronounced [ɣɑut], the adjective *gouden* is pronounced [ɣɑudə(n)], like the German noun *Gold*, pronounced [ɡɔlt], adjective *golden*, pronounced [ɡɔldn] vs English *gold* and *golden*, both pronounced with [d].)

Voicing of pre-vocalic initial voiceless alveolar fricatives occurs although less in Dutch than in German (Dutch *zeven*, German *sieben* with [z] versus English *seven* and Low German *seven* with [s]), and also the shift /θ/ → /d/. Dutch shares only with Low German the development of /xs/ → /ss/ (Dutch *vossen*, *ossen* and Low German *Vösse*, *Ossen* versus German *Füchse*, *Ochsen* and English *foxes*, *oxen*), and also the development of /ft/ → /xt/ though it is far more common in Dutch (Dutch *zacht* and Low German *sacht* versus German *sanft* and English *soft*, but Dutch *kracht* versus German *Kraft* and English *craft*).

| | <u>Bilabial</u> | <u>Labio-dental</u> | <u>Alveolar</u> | <u>Post-alveolar</u> | <u>Velar/Uvular</u> | <u>Glottal</u> |
|--------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| <u>Nasal</u> | m | | n | | ŋ | |
| <u>Plosive</u> | p b | | t d | | k [g] | (?) |
| <u>Fricative</u> | | f v | s z | [ʃ] [ʒ] | x ɣ | h |
| <u>Rhotic</u> | | | r | | | |
| <u>Approximant</u> | ʋ | | l | | j | |

Notes:

- [ʔ] is not a separate phoneme in Dutch, but is inserted before vowel-initial syllables within words after /a/ and /ə/ and often also at the beginning of a word.
- The realization of /r/ phoneme varies considerably from dialect to dialect and even between speakers in the same dialect area. Common realisations are an alveolar trill [r], alveolar tap [ɾ], uvular trill [ʀ], voiced uvular fricative [ʁ], and alveolar approximant [ɹ].
- The realization of /ʋ/ also varies somewhat by area and speaker. The main realisation is a labiodental approximant [ʋ], but some speakers, particularly in the south, use a bilabial approximant [β] or a labiovelar approximant [w].
- The lateral /l/ is slightly velarized postvocally in most dialects, particularly in the north.^[105]
- /x/ and /ɣ/ may be true velars [x] and [ɣ], uvular [χ] and [ʁ] or palatal [ç] and [j]. The more palatal realisations are common in southern areas, and uvulars are common in the north.
- Some northern dialects have a tendency to devoice all fricatives, regardless of environment, which is particularly common with /ɣ/ but can affect others as well.
- /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ are not native phonemes of Dutch and usually occur in borrowed words, like *show* and *bagage* ('baggage'), but may occur if /s/ and /z/ are palatalised.
- /g/ is not a native phoneme of Dutch and occurs only in borrowed words, like *garçon*.

Vowels

Like English, Dutch did not develop i-mutation as a morphological marker and shares with most other Germanic languages the lengthening of short vowels in stressed open syllables, which has led to contrastive vowel length being used as a morphological marker. Dutch has an extensive vowel inventory. Vowels can be grouped as back rounded, front unrounded and front rounded. They are also traditionally distinguished by length or tenseness.

Vowel length is not always considered a distinctive feature in Dutch phonology because it normally occurs with changes in vowel quality. One feature or the other may be considered redundant, and some phonemic analyses prefer to treat it as an opposition of tenseness. However, even if it is not considered part of the phonemic opposition, the long/tense vowels are still realised as *phonetically* longer than their short counterparts. The changes in vowel quality are also not always the same in all dialects, some of which may be little difference at all, with length remaining the primary distinguishing feature. Although all older words pair vowel length with a change in vowel quality, new loanwords have reintroduced phonemic oppositions of length. Compare *zonne(n)* [ˈzɔnə] ("suns") versus *zone* [ˈzɔːnə] ("zone") versus *zonen* [ˈzoːnə(n)] ("sons"), or *kroes* [krus] ("mug") versus *cruise* [kruːs] ("cruise").

| Short/lax vowels | | | | | Long/tense vowels | | | |
|------------------|---------------|---------------|---------|------|-------------------|---------------|---------------|--------|
| | Front unr. | Front rnd. | Central | Back | | Front unr. | Front rnd. | Back |
| <u>Close</u> | ɪ | ʏ | | | <u>Close</u> | i ~ iː | y ~ yː | u ~ uː |
| <u>Mid</u> | ɛ | | ə | ɔ | <u>Close-mid</u> | eː | øː | oː |
| <u>Open</u> | | | | ɑ | <u>Open-mid</u> | (ɛː) | (œː) | (ɔː) |
| | | | | | <u>Open</u> | aː | | |

Notes:

- The distinction between /i y u/ and /iː yː uː/ is only slight and may be considered allophonic for most purposes. However, some recent loanwords have introduced distinctively-long /iː yː uː/, making the length distinction marginally phonemic.
- The long close-mid vowels /eː øː oː/ are realised as slightly closing diphthongs [eɪ øʏ oʊ] in many northern dialects.
- The long open-mid vowels /ɛː œː ɔː/ occur only in a handful of loanwords, mostly from French. In certain Belgian Dutch varieties, they may also occur as realisations of /ɛi œy au/.^[105]
- The long close and close-mid vowels are often pronounced more closed or as centering diphthongs before an /r/ in the syllable coda, which may occur before coda /l/ as well.

Diphthongs

Unique to the development of Dutch is the collapse of older *ol/ul/al* + dental into *ol* + dental, followed by vocalisation of pre-consonantal /l/ and after a short vowel. That created the diphthong /au/: Dutch *goud*, *zout* and *bout* corresponds with Low German *Gold*, *Solt*, *Bolt*; German *Gold*, *Salz*, *Balt* and English *gold*, *salt*, *bolt*. It is the most common diphthong, along with /ɛi œy/. All three are the only ones commonly considered unique phonemes in Dutch. The tendency for native English+speakers is to pronounce Dutch names with /ɛi/ (written as *ij* or *ei*) as /aɪ/, (like the English "long i"), which does not normally lead to confusion for native listeners since in a number of dialects (such as in Amsterdam^[106]), the same pronunciation is heard.

In contrast, /ɑi/ and /ɔi/ are rare in Dutch. The "long/tense" diphthongs are indeed realised as proper diphthongs but are generally analysed phonemically as a long/tense vowel, followed by a glide /j/ or /ʊ/. All diphthongs end in a close vowel (/i y u/) and are grouped here by their first element.

Short/lax diphthongs


| | Front unr. | Front rnd. | Back |
|-------|---------------|---------------|---------|
| Close | | | |
| Mid | ɛi | œy | (ɔi) |
| Open | | | au (ai) |

Long/tense diphthongs

| | Front unr. | Front rnd. | Back |
|-------|---------------|---------------|-------|
| Close | iu | yu | ui |
| Mid | e : u | | o : i |
| Open | a : i | | |

Phonotactics

The syllable structure of Dutch is (C)(C)(C)V(C)(C)(C)(C). Many words, as in English, begin with three consonants: *straat* /stra:t/ (street). There are words that end in four consonants: *herfst* /hɛrfst/ (autumn), *ergst* /ɛrxst/ (worst), *interessantst* /ɪn.tə.rɛ.sɑntst/ 'most interesting), ('sterkst /stɛrkst/ (strongest), *the last three of which are superlative adjectives*.

The highest number of consonants in a single cluster is found in the word *slechtstschrijvend* /'slɛxtst ,sxrɛɪ̯vənt/ (writing worst), with seven consonant phonemes. Also *angstschreeuw*  /'ɑŋstsxre : u/ (scream in fear) has six in a row.

Polder Dutch

A notable change in pronunciation has been occurring in younger generations in the provinces of Utrecht, North Holland and South Holland, which has been dubbed "Polder Dutch" by Jan Stroop.^[107] Such speakers pronounce ⟨ij/ei⟩, ⟨ou/au⟩ and ⟨ui⟩, which used to be pronounced respectively as /ɛi/, /ɔu/, and /œy/, as increasingly lowered to [ai], [au], and [ay] respectively. In addition, the same speakers pronounce /e :/, /o :/, and /ø :/ as the diphthongs [ei], [ou], and [øy]^[108] respectively, making the change an example of a chain shift.

The change is interesting from a sociolinguistic point of view because it has apparently happened relatively recently, in the 1970s and was pioneered by older well-educated women from the upper middle classes.^[109] The lowering of the diphthongs has long been current in many Dutch dialects and is comparable to the English Great Vowel Shift and the diphthongisation of long high vowels in Modern High German, which had centuries earlier reached the state now found in Polder Dutch. Stroop theorizes that the lowering of open-mid to open diphthongs is a phonetically "natural" and inevitable development and that Dutch, after it had diphthongised the long high vowels like German and English, "should" have lowered the diphthongs like German and English as well.

Instead, he argues that the development has been artificially frozen in an "intermediate" state by the standardisation of Dutch pronunciation in the 16th century in which lowered diphthongs found in rural dialects were perceived as ugly by the educated classes and were accordingly declared substandard. Now, however, he thinks that the newly-affluent and independent women can afford to let that natural development take place in their speech. Stroop compares the role of Polder Dutch with the urban variety of British English pronunciation called Estuary English.

Among Belgian and Surinamese Dutch-speakers and speakers from other regions in the Netherlands, that vowel shift is not taking place.

Grammar

Dutch is grammatically similar to German, such as in syntax and verb morphology (for a comparison of verb morphology in English, Dutch and German, see Germanic weak verb and Germanic strong verb). Grammatical cases have largely fallen out of use and are now mostly limited to pronouns and a large number of set phrases. Inflected forms of the articles are also often found in surnames and toponyms.

Standard Dutch uses three genders to differentiate between natural gender and three when discerning grammatical gender. But for most non-Belgian speakers, the masculine and feminine genders have merged to form the common gender (de), while the neuter (het) remains distinct as before. This gender system is similar to those of most Continental Scandinavian languages. As in English, but to a lesser degree, the inflectional grammar of the language (e.g., adjective and noun endings) has simplified over time.

Verbs and tenses

When grouped according to their conjugational class, Dutch has four main verb types: weak verbs, strong verbs, irregular verbs and mixed verbs.

Weak verbs are the most numerous verbs, constituting about 60% of all verbs. In weak verbs, the past tense and past participle are formed with a dental suffix:

- Weak verbs with past in *-de*
- Weak verbs with past in *-te*

Strong verbs are the second most numerous verb group. This group is characterised by a vowel alternation of the stem in the past tense and perfect participle. Dutch distinguishes between 7 classes of strong verbs with some internal variants. Dutch is known for its large group of 'half strong verbs' these have either a weak past tense and a strong participle or a strong past tense and a weak participle. Finally there are also strong verbs that don't neatly fit in any of the seven classes. The following table shows the vowel alternations in more detail. It also shows the number of roots (bare verbs) that belong to each class, variants with a prefix are excluded.

| Verb class | Verb | | Present | | Past | | Participle | | Number of roots |
|---------------------|----------|-------------|---------|-------|--------|---------------|------------|-----------|-----------------|
| 1 | kijken | (to watch) | ɛi | kijk | e: | keek | e: | gekeken | 58 |
| 2a | bieden | (to offer) | i | bied | o: | bood | o: | geboden | 17 |
| 2b | stuiven | (to gush) | œy | stuif | o: | stoof | o: | gestoven | 23 |
| 3a | klimmen | (to climb) | ɪ | klim | ɔ | klom | ɔ | geklommen | 25 |
| 3b | zenden | (to send) | ɛ | zend | ɔ | zond | ɔ | gezonden | 18 |
| 3 + 7 | sterven | (to die) | ɛ | sterf | i | stierf | ɔ | gestorven | 6 |
| 4 | breken | (to break) | e: | breek | ɑ ~ a: | brak ~ braken | o: | gebroken | 7 |
| 4 irregular | wegen | (to weigh) | e: | weeg | o: | woog | o: | gewogen | 3 |
| 5 | geven | (to give) | e: | geef | ɑ ~ a: | gaf ~ gaven | e: | gegeven | 10 |
| 5 irregular | zitten | (to sit) | ɪ | zit | ɑ ~ a: | zat ~ zaten | e: | gezeten | 3 |
| 6 | dragen | (to carry) | a: | draag | u | droeg | a: | gedragen | 4 |
| 7 | roepen | (to call) | X | roep | i | riep | X | geroepen | 8 |
| 7 irregular | vangen | (to catch) | X | vang | ɪ | ving | X | gevangen | 3 |
| Half strong past | vragen | (to ask) | | vraag | | vroeg | | gevraagd | 3 |
| Half strong perfect | bakken | (to bake) | | bak | | bakte | | gebakken | 19 |
| Other | scheppen | (to create) | | schep | | schiep | | geschapen | 5 |

Genders and cases

As in English, the case system of Dutch and the subjunctive have largely fallen out of use, and the system has generalised the dative over the accusative case for certain pronouns (NL: *me, je*; EN: *me, you*; LI: *mi, di* vs. DE: *mich/mir, dich/dir*). While standard Dutch has three grammatical genders, this has few grammatical consequences and the masculine and feminine gender are often merged into a common gender in the Netherlands but not in Belgium (EN: none; NL/LI: common and neuter; in Belgium masculine, feminine and neuter is in use).

Modern Dutch has mostly lost its case system.^[110] However, certain idioms and expressions continue to include now archaic case declensions. The article has just two forms, *de* and *het*, more complex than English, which has only *the*. The use of the older inflected form *den* in the dative and accusative, as well as use of *der* in the dative, is restricted to numerous set phrases, surnames and toponyms.

| | Masculine singular | Feminine singular | Neuter singular | Plural (any gender) |
|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Nominative | de | de | het | de |
| Genitive | van de / des | van de / der | van het / des | van de / der |
| Dative | (aan / voor) de | (aan / voor) de | (aan / voor) het | (aan / voor) de |
| Accusative | de | de | het | de |

In modern Dutch, the genitive articles *des* and *der* are commonly used in idioms. Other usage is typically considered archaic, poetic or stylistic. In most circumstances, the preposition *van* is instead used, followed by the normal definitive article *de* or *het*. For the idiomatic use of the articles in the genitive, see for example:

- Masculine singular: "**des** duivels" (*lit*: "of the devil") (common proverbial meaning: Seething with rage)
- Feminine singular: het woordenboek **der** Friese taal ("the dictionary of the Frisian language")
- Neuter singular: de vrouw **des** huizes ("the lady of the house")
- Plural: de voortgang **der** werken ("the progress of (public) works")

In contemporary usage, the genitive case still occurs a little more often with plurals than with singulars, as the plural article is *der* for all genders and no special noun inflection must be taken account of. *Der* is commonly used in order to avoid reduplication of *van*, e.g. *het merendeel **der** gedichten **van de** auteur* instead of *het merendeel **van de** gedichten **van de** auteur* ("the bulk of the author's poems").

There is also a genitive form for the pronoun *die/dat* ("that [one], those [ones]"), namely *diens* for masculine and neuter singulars (occurrences of *dier* for feminine singular and all plurals are extremely rare). Although usually avoided in common speech, this form can be used instead of possessive pronouns to avoid confusion. Compare:

- *Hij vertelde over zijn zoon en **zijn** vrouw.* – He told about his son and **his (own)** wife.
- *Hij vertelde over zijn zoon en **diens** vrouw.* – He told about his son and **the latter's** wife.

Analogically, the relative and interrogative pronoun *wie* ("who") has the genitive forms *wiens* and *wier* (corresponding to English *whose*, but less frequent in use).

Dutch also has a range of fixed expressions that make use of the genitive articles, which can be abbreviated using apostrophes. Common examples include "'s ochtends" (with 's as abbreviation of *des*; "in the morning") and *desnoods* (*lit*: "of the need", translated: "if necessary").

The Dutch written grammar has simplified over the past 100 years: cases are now mainly used for the pronouns, such as *ik* (I), *mij*, *me* (me), *mijn* (my), *wie* (who), *wiens* (whose: masculine or neuter singular), *wier* (whose: feminine singular; masculine, feminine or neuter plural). Nouns and adjectives are not case inflected (except for the genitive of proper nouns (names): -s, -'s or -'). In the spoken language cases and case inflections had already gradually disappeared from a much earlier date on (probably the 15th century) as in many continental West Germanic dialects.

Inflection of adjectives is more complicated. The adjective receives no ending with indefinite neuter nouns in singular (as with *een* /ən/ 'a/an'), and -e in all other cases. (This was also the case in Middle English, as in "a goode man".) Note that *fiets* belongs to the masculine/feminine category, and that *water* and *huis* are neuter.

| | Masculine singular or feminine singular | Neuter singular | Plural (any gender) |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Definite (with definite article or pronoun) | de mooie fiets ("the beautiful bicycle") | het mooie huis ("the beautiful house") | de mooie fietsen ("the beautiful bicycles") de mooie huizen ("the beautiful houses") |
| Indefinite (with indefinite article or no article and no pronoun) | een mooie fiets ("a beautiful bicycle") koude soep ("cold soup") | een mooi huis ("a beautiful house") koud water ("cold water") | mooie fietsen ("beautiful bicycles") mooie huizen ("beautiful houses") |

An adjective has no **e** if it is in the predicative: *De soep is koud*.

More complex inflection is still found in certain lexicalized expressions like *de heer des huizes* (literally, "the man of the house"), etc. These are usually remnants of cases (in this instance, the genitive case which is still used in German, cf. *Der Herr des Hauses*) and other inflections no longer in general use today. In such lexicalized expressions remnants of strong and weak nouns can be found too, e.g. *in het jaar des Heren* (Anno Domini), where *-en* is actually the genitive ending of the weak noun. Similarly in some place names: *'s-Gravenbrakel*, *'s-Hertogenbosch*, etc. (with weak genitives of *graaf* "count", *hertog* "duke"). Also in this case, German retains this feature.

Word order

Dutch shares much of its word order with German. Dutch exhibits subject–object–verb word order, but in main clauses the conjugated verb is moved into the second position in what is known as verb second or V2 word order. This makes Dutch word order almost identical to that of German, but often different from English, which has subject–verb–object word order and has since lost the V2 word order that existed in Old English.^[111]

An example sentence used in some Dutch language courses and textbooks is "*Ik kan mijn pen niet vinden omdat het veel te donker is*", which translates into English word for word as "*I can my pen not find because it far too dark is*", but in standard English word order would be written "*I cannot find my pen because it is far too dark*". If the sentence is split into a main and subclause and the verbs highlighted, the logic behind the word order can be seen.

Main clause: "*Ik **kan** mijn pen niet **vinden*** "

Verbs are placed in the final position, but the conjugated verb, in this case "kan" (can), is made the second element of the clause.

Subclause: "*omdat het veel te donker **is*** "

The verb or verbs always go in the final position.

In an interrogative main clause the usual word order is: conjugated verb followed by subject; other verbs in final position:

"*Kun jij je pen niet vinden?*" (literally "*Can you your pen not find?*") "*Can't you find your pen?*"

In the Dutch equivalent of a wh-question the word order is: interrogative pronoun (or expression) + conjugated verb + subject; other verbs in final position:

"Waarom kun jij je pen niet vinden?" ("Why can you your pen not find?") "Why can't you find your pen?"

In a tag question the word order is the same as in a declarative clause:

"Jij kunt je pen niet vinden?" ("You can your pen not find?") "You can't find your pen?"

A subordinate clause does not change its word order:

"Kun jij je pen niet vinden omdat het veel te donker is?" ("Can you your pen not find because it far too dark is?") "Can you not find your pen because it's far too dark?"

Diminutives

In Dutch, the diminutive is used extensively. The nuances of meaning expressed by the diminutive are a distinctive aspect of Dutch, and can be difficult for non-native speakers to master. It is very productive^{[112]:61} and formed by adding one of the suffixes to the noun in question, depending on the latter's phonological ending:

- **-je** for ending in -b, -c, -d, -t, -f, -g, -ch, -k, -p, -v, -x, -z or -s: neef → neef**je** (*male cousin, nephew*)
- **-pje** for ending in -m: boom (*tree*) → boom**pje**
- **-kje** for ending in -ing if the preceding syllable carries the stress: koning (*king*) → konink**kje** (the 'ng'-sound transforms into 'nk'); but ring → ring**etje** (*ring*), and vondeling → vondeling**etje** (*foundling*) without this stress pattern
- **-tje** for ending in -h, -j, -l, -n, -r, -w, or a vowel other than -y: zoen → zoent**tje** (*kiss*). A single open vowel is doubled when adding "-tje" would change the pronunciation: auto → auto**ootje** (*car*).
- **-tje** for ending in -y and for abbreviations: baby → baby'tje, cd → cd'tje, A4 → A4'tje
- **-etje** for ending in -b, -l, -n, -ng or -r preceded by a "short" (lax) vowel: bal → ballet**je** (*ball*). Final consonant is doubled (except for -ng) to preserve the vowel's shortness.

The diminutive suffixes **-ke** (from which **-tje** has derived by palatalization), **-eke**, **-ske**, **-ie** (only for words ending -ch, -k, -p, or -s), **-kie** (instead of -kje), and **-pie** (instead of -pje) are used in southern dialects, and the forms ending on -ie as well in northern urban dialects. Some of these form part of expressions that became standard language, like *een makkie*, from *gemak* = *ease*). The noun *joch* (*young boy*) has, exceptionally, only the diminutive form *jochie*, also in standard Dutch. The form -ke is also found in many women's given names: Janneke, Marieke, Marijke, Mieke, Meike etc.

In Dutch, the diminutive is not merely restricted to nouns, but can be applied to numerals (*met z'n tweetjes*, "the two of us"), pronouns (*onderonsje*, "tête-à-tête"), verbal particles (*moetje*, "shotgun marriage"), and even prepositions (*toetje*, "dessert").^{[112]:64–65} Most notable however, are the diminutive forms of adjectives and adverbs. The former take a diminutive ending and thus function as nouns, the latter remain adverbs and always have the diminutive with the -s appended, e.g. adjective: groen ("green") → noun: groent**je** ("rookie"); adverb: even ("a while") → adverb: event**jes** ("a little while").

Some nouns have two different diminutives, each with a different meaning: bloem (*flower*) → bloemp**pje** (lit. "small flower"), but bloemet**je** (lit. also "small flower", meaning *bouquet*). A few nouns exist solely in a diminutive form, e.g. zeepaardje (*seahorse*), while many, e.g. meisje (*girl*), originally a diminutive of meid (*maid*), have acquired a meaning independent of their non-diminutive forms. A diminutive can sometimes

be added to an uncountable noun to refer to a single portion: ijs (*ice, ice cream*) → ijsje (*ice cream treat, cone of ice cream*), bier (*beer*) → biertje. Some diminutive forms only exist in the plural, e.g. kleertjes (*clothing*).

When used to refer to time, the Dutch diminutive form can indicate whether the person in question found it pleasant or not: *een uurtje kletsen* (*chatting for a "little" hour.*) The diminutive can, however, also be used pejoratively: *Hij was weer eens het "manneltje"*. (*He acted as if he was the "little" man.*)

Pronouns and determiners

There are two series of personal pronouns, subject and objects pronouns. The forms on the right-hand sides within each column are the unemphatic forms; those not normally written are given in brackets. Only *ons* and *u* do not have an unemphatic form. The distinction between emphatic and unemphatic pronouns is very important in Dutch.^{[112]:67} Emphatic pronouns in English use the reflexive pronoun form, but are used to emphasize the subject, not to indicate a direct or indirect object. For example, "I gave (to) myself the money" is reflexive but "I myself gave the money (to someone else) " is emphatic.

| <u>person</u> | <u>subject</u> | <u>object</u> |
|----------------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| 1st person singular | ik – ('k) | mij – me |
| 2nd person singular, informal | jij – je | jou – je |
| 2nd person singular, formal | u | u |
| 3rd person singular, masculine | hij – (ie) | hem – ('m) |
| 3rd person singular, feminine | zij – ze | haar – ('r, d'r) |
| 3rd person singular, neuter | het – ('t) | het – ('t) |
| 1st person plural | wij – we | ons |
| 2nd person plural, informal | jullie – je | jullie – je |
| 2nd person plural, formal | u | u |
| 3rd person plural, for a person | zij – ze | hun, hen – ze |
| 3rd person plural, for an object | zij – ze | die – ze |

Like English, Dutch has generalised the dative over the accusative case for all pronouns, e.g. NL 'me', 'je', EN 'me', 'you', vs. DE 'mich'/'mir' 'dich'/'dir'. There is one exception: the standard language prescribes that in the third person plural, *hen* is to be used for the direct object, and *hun* for the indirect object. This distinction was artificially introduced in the 17th century by grammarians, and is largely ignored in spoken language and not well understood by Dutch speakers. Consequently, the third person plural forms *hun* and *hen* are interchangeable in normal usage, with *hun* being more common. The shared unstressed form *ze* is also often used as both direct and indirect objects and is a useful avoidance strategy when people are unsure which form to use.^[113]

Dutch shares also with English the presence of h- pronouns, e.g. NL *hij, hem, haar, hen, hun* and EN *he, him, her* vs. DE *er, ihn, ihr, ihnen*.

Compounds

Like most Germanic languages, Dutch forms noun compounds, where the first noun modifies the category given by the second (*hondenhok* = doghouse). Unlike English, where newer compounds or combinations of longer nouns are often written in open form with separating spaces, Dutch (like the other Germanic languages) either uses the closed form without spaces (*boomhut* = tree house) or inserts a hyphen (*VVD-coryfee* = outstanding member of the VVD, a political party). Like German, Dutch allows arbitrarily long compounds, but the longer they get, the less frequent they tend to be.

The longest serious entry in the Van Dale dictionary is **wapenstilstandsonderhandeling** (ceasefire negotiation). Leafing through the articles of association (Statuten) one may come across a 30-letter **vertegenwoordigingsbevoegdheid** (authorisation of representation). An even longer word cropping up in official documents is *ziektekostenverzekeringsmaatschappij* (health insurance company) though the shorter *zorgverzekeraar* (health insurer) is more common.

Notwithstanding official spelling rules, some Dutch-speaking people, like some Scandinavians and German speakers, nowadays tend to write the parts of a compound separately, a practice sometimes dubbed *de Engelse ziekte* (the English disease).^[114]

Vocabulary

Dutch vocabulary is predominantly Germanic in origin, with loanwords accounting for 20%.^[115] The main foreign influence on Dutch vocabulary since the 12th century and culminating in the French period has been French and (northern) Oil languages, accounting for an estimated 6.8% of all words, or more than a third of all loanwords. Latin, which was spoken in the southern Low Countries for centuries and then played a major role as the language of science and religion, follows with 6.1%. High German and Low German were influential until the mid-19th century and account for 2.7%, but they are mostly unrecognizable since many have been "Dutchified": German *Fremdling* → Dutch *vreemdeling*. Dutch has borrowed words from English since the mid-19th century, as a consequence of the increasing power and influence of Britain and the United States. English loanwords are about 1.5%, but continue to increase.^[116] Many English loanwords become less visible over time as they are either gradually replaced by calques (*skyscraper* became Dutch *wolkenkrabber*) or neologisms (*bucket list* became *loodjeslijst*). Conversely, Dutch contributed many loanwords to English, accounting for 1.3% of its lexicon.^[117]

The main Dutch dictionary is the *Van Dale groot woordenboek der Nederlandse taal*, which contains some 268,826 headwords.^[118] In the field of linguistics, the 45,000-page *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* is also widely used. That scholarly endeavour took 147 years to complete and contains all recorded Dutch words from the Early Middle Ages onward.

Spelling and writing system

Dutch is written using the Latin script. Dutch uses one additional character beyond the standard alphabet, the digraph *IJ*. It has a relatively high proportion of doubled letters, both vowels and consonants, due to the formation of compound words and also to the spelling devices for distinguishing the many vowel sounds in the Dutch language. An example of five consecutive doubled letters is the word *voorraaddoos* (food storage container). The diaeresis (Dutch: *trema*) is used to mark vowels that are pronounced separately when involving a pre- or suffix, and a hyphen is used when the problem occurs in compound words. For example; "beïnvloed" (influenced), de zeeën (the seas) but *zee-eend* (scoter; litt: sea duck). Generally, other diacritical



The 27-letter compound *hemelwaterinfiltratiegebied* (rainwater infiltration area) on a traffic sign in Zwolle, Netherlands

marks occur only in loanwords. However, the acute accent can also be used for emphasis or to differentiate between two forms, and its most common use is to differentiate between the indefinite article 'een' /ən/ (a, an) and the numeral 'één' /e:n/ (one).

Since the 1980s, the Dutch Language Union has been given the mandate to review and make recommendations on the official spelling of Dutch. Spelling reforms undertaken by the union occurred in 1995 and 2005. In the Netherlands, the official spelling is currently given legal basis by the Spelling Act of 15 September 2005.^{[n 13][n 14]} The Spelling Act gives the Committee of Ministers of the Dutch Language Union the authority to determine the spelling of Dutch by ministerial decision. In addition, the law requires that this spelling be followed "at the governmental bodies, at educational institutions funded from the public purse, as well as at the exams for which legal requirements have been established". In other cases, it is recommended, but it is not mandatory to follow the official spelling. The Decree on the Spelling Regulations 2005 of 2006 contains the annexed spelling rules decided by the Committee of Ministers on 25 April 2005.^{[n 15][n 16]} In Flanders, the same spelling rules are currently applied by the Decree of the Flemish Government Establishing the Rules of the Official Spelling and Grammar of the Dutch language of 30 June 2006.^[n 17]



Dutch uses the digraph IJ as a single letter. Shown is a bus road marking saying *lijnbus*.

The *Woordenlijst Nederlandse taal*, more commonly known as "het groene boekje" (i.e. "the green booklet", because of its color), is the authoritative orthographic word list (without definitions) of the Dutch Language Union; a version with definitions can be had as *Het Groene Woordenboek*; both are published by Sdu.

See also

- Bargoens
- Dutch Braille
- Dutch grammar
- Dutch Language Union
- Dutch linguistic influence on military terms
- Dutch literature
- Dutch name
- Dutch orthography
- Dutch-based creole languages
- Flemish
- French Flemish
- Grand Dictation of the Dutch Language
- Indo-European languages
- Istvaeones
- List of English words of Dutch origin
- List of territorial entities where Afrikaans and Dutch are official languages
- Low Dietsch
- Low Franconian
- Meuse-Rhenish
- Middle Dutch
- Old Frankish

Notes

1. In France, a historical dialect called French Flemish is spoken. There are about 80,000 Dutch speakers in France; see Simpson 2009, p. 307. In French Flanders, only a remnant of 20,000 Flemish-speakers remain; see Berdichevsky 2004, p. 90. French Flemish is spoken in the north-west of France by an estimated population of 20,000 daily speakers and 40,000 occasional speakers; see European Commission 2010.

A dialect continuum exists between Dutch and German through the South Guelderish and Limburgish dialects.

In 1941, 400,000 Indonesians spoke Dutch, and Dutch exerted a major influence on Indonesian; see Sneddon 2003, p. 161. In 1941, about 0.5% of the inland population had a reasonable knowledge of Dutch; see Maier 2005, p. 12. At the beginning of World War II, about one million Asians had an active command of Dutch, while an additional half million had a passive knowledge; see Jones 2008, p. xxxi. Many older Indonesians speak Dutch as a second language; see Thomson 2003, p. 80. Some of the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia speak Dutch amongst each other; see Tan 2008, pp. 62–64, Erdentuğ & Colombijn 2002, p. 104. Dutch is spoken by "smaller groups of speakers" in Indonesia; see Bussmann 2002, p. 83. Some younger Indonesians learn Dutch as a foreign language because their parents and grandparents may speak it and because in some circles, Dutch is regarded as the language of the elite; see Vos 2001, p. 91. At present, only educated people of the oldest generation, in addition to specialists who require knowledge of the language, can speak Dutch fluently; see Ammon 2006, p. 2017. Around 25% of present-day Indonesian vocabulary can be traced back to Dutch words, see Maier 2005, p. 17.

2. 410,000 in USA, 159,000 in Canada, 47,000 in Australia; see Simpson 2009, p. 307. Between 200,000 and 400,000 in USA alone; see McGoldrick, Giordano & Garcia-Preto 2005, p. 536.
3. Afrikaans is a daughter language of Dutch; see Booij 1999, p. 2, Jansen, Schreuder & Neijt 2007, p. 5, Mennen, Levelt & Gerrits 2006, p. 1, Booij 2003, p. 4, Hiskens, Auer & Kerswill 2005, p. 19, Heeringa & de Wet 2007, pp. 1, 3, 5.

Afrikaans was historically called Cape Dutch; see Deumert & Vandenbussche 2003, p. 16, Conradie 2005, p. 208, Sebba 1997, p. 160, Langer & Davies 2005, p. 144, Deumert 2002, p. 3, Berdichevsky 2004, p. 130.

Afrikaans is rooted in 17th century dialects of Dutch; see Holm 1989, p. 338, Geerts & Clyne 1992, p. 71, Mesthrie 1995, p. 214, Niesler, Louw & Roux 2005, p. 459.

Afrikaans is variously described as a creole, a partially creolised language, or a deviant variety of Dutch; see Sebba 2007, p. 116.

4. It has the widest geographical and racial distribution of all official languages of South Africa; see Webb 2003, pp. 7, 8, Berdichevsky 2004, p. 131. It has by far the largest geographical distribution; see Alant 2004, p. 45.
It is widely spoken and understood as a second or third language; see Deumert & Vandenbussche 2003, p. 16, Kamwangamalu 2004, p. 207, Myers-Scotton 2006, p. 389, Simpson 2008, p. 324, Palmer 2001, p. 141, Webb 2002, p. 74, Herriman & Burnaby 1996, p. 18, Page & Sonnenburg 2003, p. 7, Brook Napier 2007, pp. 69, 71.
An estimated 40 percent of South Africans have at least a basic level of communication in Afrikaans; see Webb 2003, p. 7 McLean & McCormick 1996, p. 333. Afrikaans is a lingua franca of Namibia; see Deumert 2004, p. 1, Adegbija 1994, p. 26, Batibo 2005, p. 79, Donaldson 1993, p. xiii, Deumert & Vandenbussche 2003, p. 16, Baker & Prys Jones 1998, p. 364, Domínguez & López 1995, p. 399, Page & Sonnenburg 2003, p. 8, CIA 2010.
While the number of total speakers of Afrikaans is unknown, estimates range between 15 and 23 million. Afrikaans has 16.3 million speakers; see de Swaan 2001, p. 216. Afrikaans has a total of 16 million speakers; see Machan 2009, p. 174. About 9 million people speak Afrikaans as a second or third language; see Alant 2004, p. 45, Proost 2006, p. 402. Afrikaans has over 5 million native speakers and 15 million second language speakers; see Réguer 2004, p. 20. Afrikaans has about 6 million native and 16 million second language speakers; see Domínguez & López 1995, p. 340. In South Africa, over 23 million people speak Afrikaans to some degree, of which a third are first-language speakers; see Page & Sonnenburg 2003, p. 7. L2 "Black Afrikaans" is spoken, with different degrees of fluency, by an estimated 15 million; see Stell 2008–11, p. 1.
Dutch and Afrikaans share mutual intelligibility; see Gooskens 2007, p. 453, Holm 1989, p. 338, Baker & Prys Jones 1998, p. 302, Egil Breivik & Håkon Jahr 1987, p. 232. For written mutual intelligibility; see Sebba 2007, p. 116, Sebba 1997, p. 161.
It is easier for Dutch speakers to understand Afrikaans than the other way around; see Gooskens 2007, p. 454.
5. Dutch and English are the closest relatives of German; see Abraham 2006, p. 124. Dutch is the closest relative of German; see Czepluch & Abraham 2004, p. 13. Dutch and English are closely related; see Ingram 1989, p. 494, Todd 2004, p. 37, Kager 1989, p. 105, Hogg 2002, p. 134, De Bot, Lowie & Verspoor 2005, pp. 130, 166, Weissenborn & Höhle 2001, p. 209, Crisma & Longobardi 2009, p. 250. Dutch and English are very closely related languages; see Fitzpatrick 2007, p. 188. Dutch is, after Frisian, the closest relative of English; see Mallory & Adams 2006, p. 23, Classe 2000, p. 390, Hogg 2002, p. 3, Denning, Kessler & Leben 2007, p. 22. English is most closely related to Dutch; see Lightfoot 1999, p. 22, and more so than to German; see Sonnenschein 2008, p. 100, Kennedy Wyld 2009, p. 190.
6. Dutch is traditionally described as morphologically between English and German, but syntactically closer to German; see Clyne 2003, p. 133. Dutch has been positioned to be between English and German; see Putnam 2011, p. 108, Bussmann 2002, p. 83, Müller 1995, p. 121, Onysko & Michel 2010, p. 210. Typologically, Dutch takes a midway position between English and German, with a similar word order to that of German, grammatical gender, and a largely Germanic vocabulary. It is morphologically close to English, and the case system and subjunctive have largely fallen out of use; see Swan & Smith 2001, p. 6.
7. Dutch shares with English its simplified morphology and the abandonment of the grammatical case system; see Booij 1999, p. 1, Simpson 2009, p. 309. In contrast to German, case markings have become vestigial in English and Dutch; see Hogg 2002, p. 134, Abraham 2006, p. 118, Bussmann 2002, p. 83, Swan & Smith 2001, p. 6. The umlaut in Dutch and English matured to a much lesser extent than in German; see Simpson 2009, p. 307, Lass 1994, p. 70, Deprez 1997, p. 251.
8. Dutch has effectively two genders; see Booij 1999, p. 1, Simpson 2009, p. 309, De Vogelaer 2009, p. 71. Grammatical gender has little grammatical consequences in Dutch; see Bussmann 2002, p. 84

9. Simpson 2009, p. 307, Booij 1999, p. 1 Dutch and German do not have a strict SVO order as in English; see Hogg 2002, pp. 87, 134. In contrast to English, which has SVO as the underlying word order, for Dutch and German this is SV₁OV₂ or (in subordinate clauses) SOV; see Ingram 1989, p. 495, Jordens & Lalleman 1988, pp. 149, 150, 177. Dutch has almost the same word order as German; see Swan & Smith 2001, p. 6.
10. Dutch vocabulary has more Germanic words than English and more Romance words than German; see Simpson 2009, p. 309, Swan & Smith 2001, p. 17. Dutch vocabulary is mostly Germanic; see Swan & Smith 2001, p. 6. Dutch has the most similar vocabulary to English; see Mallory & Adams 2006, p. 1.
11. Friedrich Maurer uses the term *Istvaeonic* instead of Franconian; see Friedrich Maurer (1942), *Nordgermanen und Alemannen: Studien zur germanischen und frühdeutschen Sprachgeschichte, Stammes- und Volkskunde*, Bern: Verlag Francke.
12. Recognition of Surinamese-Dutch (*Surinaams-Nederlands*) as an equal natiolect was expressed in 1976 by the publication of the *Woordenboek van het Surinaams-Nederlands – een geannoteerde lijst van Surinaams-Nederlandse woorden en uitdrukkingen* (*Dictionary of Surinam Dutch – an annotated list of Surinam-Dutch words and expressions*), see Johannes van Donselaar *Woordenboek van het Surinaams-Nederlands – een geannoteerde lijst van Surinaams-Nederlandse woorden en uitdrukkingen*, Utrecht : Instituut A. W. de Groot voor Algemene Taalwetenschap van de Rijksuniversiteit te Utrecht (1976), Amsterdam, E.T.Rap (1977) ISBN 90-6005-125-4, published in 1989 as the *Woordenboek van het Surinaams-Nederlands* (*Dictionary of Surinam Dutch*), by Van Donselaar, and later by the publication of the *Woordenboek Surinaams Nederlands* (*Dictionary Surinam Dutch*) in 2009 (editor Renata de Bies, in cooperation with lexicologists Willy Martin en Willy Smedts), which was previously published as the *Woordenboek van de Surinaamse Bijdrage aan het Nederlands* (*Dictionary of the Surinam Contribution to Dutch*).
13. see *Spellingwet* (<https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0018784/2010-10-10>) (in Dutch)
14. This came into force on 22 February 2006, replacing the Act on the Spelling of the Dutch Language of 14 February 1947. see *Wet voorschriften schrijfwijze Nederlandsche taal* (<https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0002027/>) (in Dutch)
15. see *Besluit bekendmaking spellingvoorschriften 2005* (<https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0019422/>) (in Dutch)
16. This decree entered into force on August 1, 2006, replacing the Spelling Decree of June 19, 1996. see *Spellingbesluit* (<https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0008116/>) (in Dutch)
17. see *Besluit van de Vlaamse Regering tot vaststelling van de regels van de officiële spelling en spraakkunst van de Nederlandse taal* (<http://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/eli/besluit/2006/06/30/2009036011/staatsblad>) (in Dutch)

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